

CAREFULLY GUARD WILL OF MARTHA WASHINGTON

Fairfax Officials Protect It as Jealously as Crown Jewels of England.

BACK IN HISTORIC COURTHOUSE

Certified Copy of Precious Document and Photograph of First and Last Pages Obtained Through Permission of Clerk of Court.

Guarded as jealously as the crown jewels of England, the original last will and testament of Martha Washington, wife of George Washington, is back once more in the vaults of the historic Fairfax County Courthouse at Fairfax, Va.

Taken by Union soldiers from the courthouse during the Civil War, the will has been an object of search by the people of Fairfax County for more than fifty years. Discovery of the relic among the effects of the late J. Pierpont Morgan two years ago led to a bitter controversy between the State of Virginia and J. P. Morgan, Jr., who refused to surrender it. Not until two weeks ago, when the contention was about to be aired before the Supreme Court of the United States, did the New York financier capitulate.

What price Mr. Morgan paid for the relic is not known, but that he prized it as one of the most valuable papers in his collection of historic documents is shown by the fact that he kept the secret of its possession for it up to the time of his death and not only permitted a publication of its text. The fact that the present article is able to include this text is due to the persistence of the writer in obtaining a certified copy of it from the clerk of the court, and getting permission to take a photograph of the first page of the original, which contains the signature of Mrs. Washington.

TO BE PLACED IN WILL

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

For it is no mean task to get the court officials to let a stranger handle the precious document. Shortly it is to be placed in a fireproof safe in the vaults of the courthouse, where it will be kept until the original last will and testament of George Washington, which was admitted to probate in the same court in the year 1800, two years before Mrs. Washington died. This latter will was miraculously saved at the outbreak of the Civil War by E. D. Richardson, clerk of the court, who carried it to Richmond for safe keeping. The present clerk of the court, F. W. Richardson, is a son of the former clerk, the clerkship having remained in a single family for more than eighty-five years.

The will near the will of George Washington is an autograph report by Washington on a survey of the county and the original of a test oath signed by the officials of Fairfax County, 1791, according to the form prescribed by the British government to prevent Catholics and Nonconformists from holding office in Virginia.

The courthouse in which the documents are kept was built 100 years ago, and is called the "power" courthouse, the older one, built about 150 years ago, being a small square building, two-story structure, standing in the same courtyard, but about 100 feet further back from the road. It was from this older building that the Martha Washington will was actually taken.

A village of Fairfax itself has probably changed but little in appearance since the Civil War. Set among the foothills of the Blue Ridge, well back from the belt of parks and parks, it is connected with Washington, D. C., by a trolley line. Its people are numbered among the best families of Virginia and its pride lies principally in the fact that it is the county seat of the county which includes Mt. Vernon, the home of the Father of His Country. After meeting any of the leading citizens of Fairfax, there is little wonder at the reverence with which they regard the will of Martha Washington, and the determination with which they successfully contend that young Morgan should not get the will to their country unconditionally.

FAIRFAX OFFICIALS

IN BETTER OF DOCUMENT

Two weeks ago all Fairfax County turned out at the celebration at the Fairfax Courthouse, incident to the actual return of the will of Martha Washington. General himself was present, and with pomp and more oratory, the sacred relic was turned over to the safekeeping of the white-haired Mr. Richardson.

The will itself is a lengthy one, written in longhand on foolscap, and is remarkably well preserved. It reads as follows:

The will of Martha Washington of Mount Vernon.

In the name of God, Amen.

I, Martha Washington, of Mount Vernon, in the County of Fairfax, being of sound mind and memory, do hereby declare this to be my last will and testament, hereby revoking all other wills and testaments by me heretofore made, I give and bequeath to my nephew, Samuel Peter, my dear desire that all my just debts may be punctually paid, and that as speedily as the same can be done.

Item: I give and bequeath to my nephew, Samuel Peter, my dear desire that all my just debts may be punctually paid, and that as speedily as the same can be done.

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First and Last Pages of Martha Washington Will

The will of Martha Washington of Mount Vernon

In the Name of God, Amen

I Martha Washington of Mount Vernon

in the County of Fairfax being of sound mind and Capable of disposing

of my Worldly Estate do make Ordain and declare this to be my last will

and Testament hereby revoking all other Wills and Testaments by me heretofore Made

Impressio It is my desire that all my just Debts

may be punctually paid, and that as speedily as the same can be done

Law Thomas Pitt brother of my last will and Testament In

Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this twenty

second day of September in the year Eighteen Hundred

Signed Signed acknowledged and Martha Washington

Delivered as her last Will and Testament in the presence of us the Subscribing

Witnesses who have hereunto set our hands and seals in her presence

Roger Farrell William Spence Lawrence Lewis Martha Peter

March 5th 1800

I give to my friend son George Washington

Parke Custis my Mulatto Man Eliza that I bought of W

Bulfinch Washington to him and his heirs forever

Sh Washington

age of twenty-one years whichsoever

shall first happen, together with all

the interest on said debt remaining un-

paid at the time of my death, and in

case the whole or any part of the said

principal sum of 2,000 shall be paid

to me during my life, then it is my will

that so much money to be raised out

of my estate as shall be equal to what

I shall have received of the said prin-

cipal debt and disburse among my

four nieces aforesaid, as herein has

been bequeathed, and it is my meaning

that the interest accruing after my

death on the said sum of 2,000 shall

belong to my said nieces and be equally

divided between them, or such of them

as shall be alive at the time of my

death, and be paid annually for their

respective uses until they receive their

shares of the principal.

Item: I give and bequeath to my

granddaughter, Elizabeth Parke Law,

the dressing table and glass that

stands in the chamber called the Yel-

low Room, and General Washington's

picture painted by Trumbull.

Item: I give and bequeath to my

granddaughter, Eleanor Parke Lewis,

the large looking glass in the front

parlor, and any other looking glass

which she may choose, also one of the

new sideboard tables in the new room,

also twelve chairs with green bottoms

to be selected by herself, also the mar-

ble table in the garret, also the two

prints of the dead soldier, a print of

the Washington family in a box in

the garret, and the great chair stand-

ing in my chamber, all the plated ware

not heretofore otherwise bequeathed,

also all the sheets, table linen, nap-

kins, towels, pillow cases remaining

in the house at my death, also three

beds and bedsteads, curtains, bolsters

and pillows for each bed such as she

shall choose and not herein particu-

larly otherwise bequeathed, together with

counterpanes and a pair of blankets for

each bed, also all the wine glasses and

decanters of every kind, and all the

blue and white china in common use.

ALL WINE IN BOTTLES

EQUALLY DIVIDED

Item: It is my will and desire that

all the wine in bottles in the vaults to

be equally divided between my grand-

daughters and grandson, to each of

whom I bequeath ten guineas to buy

a ring for each.

Item: It is my will and desire that

Anna Maria Washington, the daughter

of my niece, to be put in handsome

mourning at my death at the expense

of my estate, and I bequeath to her

ten guineas to buy a ring.

Item: I give and bequeath to my

neighbor, Mrs. Elizabeth Washington,

five guineas, to get something in re-

membrance of me.

Item: I give and bequeath to Mrs.

David Stuart five guineas to buy her

a ring.

Item: I give and bequeath to Ben-

jamin Lincoln Lear 1000 specie to be

vested in funded stock of the United

States immediately after my decease,

and to stand in his name as his prop-

erty, which investment my executors

are to cause to be made.

Item: When the vestry of Truro

Parish shall buy a globe I desire, will

and bequeath that my executors shall

pay 1000 to them to aid of the pur-

chase, provided the said purchase shall

be made in my lifetime or within three

years after my decease.

Item: It is my will and desire that

all the rest and residue of my estate

of whatsoever kind and description not

herein specifically devised or be-

queathed shall be sold by the execu-

tors of this my last will for ready

money as soon after my decease as the

same can be done, and that the pro-

ceeds thereof, together with all the

money in the house, and the debts due

me (the debts due from me and the

legacies herein bequeathed being first

satisfied) shall be invested by my ex-

ecutors in 8 per cent stock of the funds

of the United States, and shall stand

on the books in the name of my ex-

ecutors in their character of executors

of my will, and it is my desire, that

the interest thereof shall be applied to

the proper education of Bartholomew

Henley and Samuel Henley, the two

youngest sons of my sister Henley, and

also to the education of John Dan-

dridge, son of my deceased nephew,

John Danbridge, so that they may be

severally fitted and accomplished in

some useful trade, and to each of them

who shall have lived to finish his edu-

cation or to reach the age of twenty-

one years, I give and bequeath 1000

to set him up in his trade.

ESTATE EQUALLY DIVIDED

AMONG